

NetGuide

By Craig A. Rose

I could feel the sweat breaking out on my upper lip as we cruised north toward San Francisco at a brisk 50 miles per hour. Sleep was totally impossible as the train rocked from side to side and the other passengers spoke loudly of the PowerPC versus the Pentium. The deals they could make on a DayStar accelerator, and what kind of edible matter (I can't believe what passes for food at these things) might be available at the big show.

Of course, I am referring to the annual MacWorld Exposition which was recently held in San Francisco. My fear, revealing itself in the form of uncontrollable perspiration during the journey, was directly linked to my technological malaise. I instantly felt as if I was to be the only person within a thousand mile radius of The Moscone Convention Center who wouldn't be totally knowledgeable in every aspect of System 7 Pro or the latest version of PageMaker.

Would my fears be realized? Would I find myself lost in a sea of techno-proficient wizards? Or would I just get sick from the food? I am proud to report that I made it through the experience suffering only mild intimidation at the hands of an engineer that had just arrived from the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. As for the food, nothing that a little Pepto-Bismol couldn't solve.

If there is one thing that seems to be universal among computer users, it's confusion. Confusion about software, hardware, customer service, product availability, prices, and capabilities—the list goes on. Whether you use a Macintosh, a PC with Windows, UNIX or some other operating system, you can be certain that confusion will reign supreme at some point during your special relationship with that little box.

When it comes to those moments of stark fear, and work flow interruption, OneNet can be incredibly useful. There are several conferences available that provide a real wealth of information for every conceivable type of computer user.

The first of these conferences is the **Windows Tech Forum**. The title is a little misleading, as there are several sub conferences including: **DOS**, **Windows**, **OS/2** and **Mac/Dos Warz**. In each of these sub conferences you will be able to garner useful information for your particular situation. If you are just looking for a good debate, check out the **Mac/DOS Warz** for that never ending squabble over the best operating system.

A new conference that may not be widely available as you are reading this, but is sure to spread in popularity, and spark some stimulating debate, is **The Future of Macintosh**. With the move to the PowerPC, and the recent financial difficulties experienced by Apple, this topic will be informative, and highly entertaining.

For those of us who don't quite understand all of the hoopla over the PowerPC, it might be worth the time to check out the **PowerPC** conference for the scoop. The questions there range from "Can I upgrade my Mac IIsi?" to real life explanations of native software availability and performance expectations. You'll also get a clear picture of the battle between Intel and Motorola as the release of the PowerPC begins to impact the market.

What about those nagging questions that always seem to arise when it comes to the latest Apple hardware or even the *old* Apple hardware? The perfect place to ask a question or provide assistance to another user is the **Mac Hardware** conference. In fact, you'll also find that this conference contains information and discussion on a myriad of non-Apple products including printers, and other peripherals. Don't be shy, the only dumb question is the one that's never asked.

The **System Seven** conference will help anyone who has wondered about the capabilities of the latest Mac operating system. When it comes to fonts, extensions, or aliases, you too can harness the power, or confusion, of System Seven by visiting this conference.

Finally, the conference that tends to sum it all up for the average Mac user, the **Mac Software** conference. Open to anyone who has been stymied by any Mac application you can think of. If you don't see the question posted already, do it yourself and watch how quickly help arrives. It's a little bit like "9-1-1" for the Macintosh user.

This is only a partial listing of the fantastic computer-related conferences available throughout The OneNet. Not only will these conferences help you with your day to day computer usage, they will help you avoid embarrassing situations that might call your techno-savvy into question.

Watch for the next issue of *OneNet World* in which the "NetGuide" will take a special excursion into the world of true debate. Stay tuned and find out if you can handle the heat.